

Every coach and athletic director that I know says this is a huge problem and that we need some type of uniform standards and regulations to govern sports agents. One of the biggest problems that we have is these people come on the campus and nobody knows they are there. They see the players in the dorms; they harass them and call them on the phone. Some of the better players end up having to get unlisted phone numbers because of all the harassment.

Currently, Mr. Speaker, there are only 15 States that have tough laws regulating actions by sports agents. There are 17 States, including my home State of Nebraska, that have no laws at all regulating sports agents, and then there are 18 States remaining that have some laws. It is kind of a hodgepodge, a patchwork; and there is no consistency and no teeth in the regulations. So the majority of young people coming out of college really are not protected by any laws that would govern sports agents.

With this problem in mind, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GORDON) and I have introduced H.R. 361, the Sports Agent Responsibility and Trust Act, which is also known as SPARTA. SPARTA protects student athletes by making it illegal for sports agents to entice student athletes with false or misleading information, promises, or representations in order to lure them into a contract. SPARTA would protect student athletes when they travel to other States.

Some student athletes are in States with some laws, but once they go home for the summer in another State or go to a bowl game, sometimes they are preyed upon by sports agents in those areas. So this provides a uniform Federal backstop. It does not supplant State laws, and we feel it is a very sound piece of legislation.

As of April 2002, the National Football League Players Association reported 1,200 certified football agents. Eight hundred of those represent no clients. Now, those are the guys that are really not very well qualified, and they are particularly dangerous because they are desperate to represent somebody. So they will make almost any kind of a deal, any kind of a promise to get someone committed.

We think, of course, that this is obviously a huge problem. But let me just cite two cases from my own experience. One: we were getting on the bus to go to the Orange Bowl, and I could not find my quarterback two hours before kickoff. I finally located him in one corner of the lobby cornered by two agents that he had never seen before, I had never heard of before, and were obviously unscrupulous; and they are hammering this guy to try to get him to sign a contract right before a kickoff. Well, of course, this did not do the quarterback any good, and it did not do me any good either.

In one other case we had a young man who was contacted at his home during the summer and he signed a

contract. He did not really understand what he signed, but buried in the fine print was a 13 percent commission for the agent. So the agent got several hundred thousand dollars from this young man. Fortunately, the agent was from a State that did have some laws governing agents, and this agent had not registered. So we were able to recover \$300,000 of this young man's money because of some sports agent legislation.

So what we are saying is we need this kind of protection for all athletes in all States. It is a Federal backstop. We think this is sound legislation, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 361, the Sports Agent Responsibility and Trust Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PEACE RETURNS TO VIEQUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ. Mr. Speaker, a couple of years ago, I met a young girl from Vieques by the name of Marakiani Olivencia. She came up to me with a small container of sand in her hand and shared with me her desire to return that sand to Vieques with me after the Navy bombing practices ended.

With passion and sincerity this girl represented what so many had felt for so long. I told her that sooner or later such a day would come, and we would return that sand to Vieques together.

□ 1600

Indeed, such a day is upon us. As of today, Vieques is no longer a Navy bombing range, and has become the newest addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System. I have with me a copy of the letter and memorandum of agreement signed between the Navy and the Fish and Wildlife Service making official that land transfer and ask that it be made part of the RECORD.

For the first time in over 60 years, Vieques awoke this morning, their island not having been bombed last night, the island not to be bombed today, and knowing for certain that the island shall never be bombed again. Now the shore of Vieques will be dominated only by the sound of the surf, the birds, and the wind. The thousands of Puerto Ricans living in Vieques achieved their long-sought peace. Today "Pas para Vieques" is a reality.

For generations, the Viequeses have not known life without bombing. Thousands of families have lived their whole

life with the concussion of bombs and shells upon their island at night, during the day, in the coastal waters.

Vieques became a bombing and training range for the Navy in the 1940s during World War II. Without a doubt, much has been changed since then. While the bombing has continued, awareness about the island of Vieques has grown. Viequeses and Puerto Ricans reached out, and shared with people what was happening to their island. Well, over a hundred Members of Congress actively supported bringing an end to the bombing. I must note a few of them, particularly the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and my colleagues, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ), the gentleman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. SERRANO). I must also thank the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services, the Congressional Black Caucus, activists, and many common citizens of the United States and elsewhere who became involved in the effort to return peace and to end bombing of the island of Vieques.

Puerto Ricans also enjoyed strong leadership on this issue by President Bill Clinton and President Bush, who both realized that this was an issue of human rights and the citizens of Puerto Rico have suffered for too long. Having worked with the White House and both Commanders-in-Chief on this issue, I know that our national security and the well-being of thousands of citizens in Vieques were taken into consideration when making this determination.

On behalf of Puerto Rico, I thank President Clinton and President Bush for ending the bombing of Vieques. Puerto Rico will never forget your resolute commitment. Today is a day of discovery, wonderment and joy.

Unfortunately, last night a small group of people rushed the fence of the range and recklessly overturned vehicles, set fires and destroyed government property. It is unfortunate that some have undermined the peaceful protest of the past. Prayers of thanks, fireworks, parades and excitement will accompany the joy of today. I strongly condemn those few who have shown disrespect to the United States, Puerto Rico and Vieques. All must know that the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans are proud of their bond with the United States, and our support for the common defense is resolute.

While we celebrate the end of the bombing, much work remains. Over 60 years of explosions, bombings, waste disposal and burning have left much of the Vieques range littered with a deadly combination of unexploded ordnance and toxic chemicals. I am confident that in cooperation with EPA, Fish and Wildlife, the Pentagon, the Puerto Rican government and Vieques, we will be able to reclaim this land.

So to Markiani, the young girl who brought me the sand from Vieques, I

say our day is upon us and we may return to the free shores of Vieques and take with us the sand to fulfill the dream you shared with me. But Markiani, you cannot yet play safely on all of the beaches until the cleanup is completed. Your ultimate dream is that the lands be returned finally to the people of Vieques. One day all of Vieques will be reclaimed, safe for the people to fully enjoy without fears of bombing or the residue of Naval training. As one era ends and another begins, we celebrate the long-awaited peace for Vieques.

The aforementioned letter is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, April 30, 2003.

Hon. CRAIG MANSON,
Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish,
Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Department of the
Interior, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. MANSON: Public Law 106-398, as amended by Public Law 107-107, directs that upon termination of Navy and Marine Corps operations on the Island of Vieques, the Secretary of the Navy shall transfer to the Secretary of the Interior, without reimbursement, approximately 14,572.791 acres located on the eastern end of Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. A description of the property is attached. Note that this transfer excludes the approximately 96-acre parcel known as Parcel C, which was acquired on April 29, 2003 by the Department of the Interior.

As agreed to by Mr. Sam Hamilton, Southeast Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, all Navy and Marine Corps operations on the Island of Vieques will terminate at noon, April 30, 2003, and the Department of the Navy hereby transfers its interests in and jurisdiction over the approximately 14,572.791 acres of East Vieques to the Department of the Interior at that time.

The Commander, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command is responsible for implementing this transfer on behalf of the Department of the Navy. He may be reached at the following address and phone number: Rear Admiral Michael K. Loose, CEC, USN, Commander, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 1510 Gilbert Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23511-2699, 757-322-8000.

I request that you acknowledge the Department of the Interior's acceptance of jurisdiction, custody, and control for this property by signing and returning a copy of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff or me with any questions on this transfer.

Sincerely,

HANSFORD T. JOHNSON,
Secretary of the Navy Acting.

Attachment.

ATTACHMENT

Acknowledgement of the Acceptance of transfer for Jurisdiction over, Custody of, and Control for approximately 14,572.791 acres located on the eastern end of Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. This transfer shall be effective at 11:59 A.M., EDT April 30, 2003.

CRAIG MANSON,
Assistant Secretary of the
Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL AUCTIONEERS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FEENEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota

(Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud lifetime Member of the National Auctioneers Association. We want to recognize today National Auctioneers Day, which takes place annually on the third Saturday of April. This year it fell on April 19. And I suppose some of my colleagues are wondering can he really do that? Yes, I do a lot of auctions even today: "And now 35, I'll give you 40, now 5. Anybody bid 45? I'll give you 50."

I have had the privilege of auctioneering events to raise money for the American Cancer Society, the Boys and Girls Club, Safari Club, Ducks Unlimited, the list goes on and on. As a matter of fact, since I was elected to Congress, I have raised almost \$2 million for charity. Every year billions of dollars are poured into our economy from auctions of estates, of vehicles, thoroughbred horses, antiques and other goods. And auctions of homes and other real estate are increasingly more important as more and more realtors and homeowners see the advantages of selling by auction as their first choice.

On Auctioneer's Day this year, auctioneers across the country held a special fund-raiser for the Saint Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, the chosen charity of the National Auctioneers Association. Auctioneers are generous and patriotic Americans, and I rise to salute their contributions to our great country.

HONORING STATE SENATOR CLARENCE W. BLOUNT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Maryland Senator Clarence W. Blount, a man whose life exemplified the greatness that lives within all of us.

I am saddened to inform this body that in the afternoon of April 12, 2003, State Senator Clarence Blount passed away from complications related to a stroke at the age of 81. He is survived by his wife Gordine, and his two sons, Michael and Mark, and many more friends and family in Maryland who mourn the loss of this great statesman.

Mr. Speaker, W.E.B. DuBois once wrote that "the roots of the tree, rather than its leaves, are the source of its life." Today I honor a man who devoted his life to that principle.

When Clarence Blount died, he was best known as the former majority leader of the Maryland Senate where he served the people of Maryland for over 31 years, after stepping aside last year to let in some "new blood," and as a champion of public education. However, I recall this wonderful human being as my teacher, my mentor and friend. Clarence Blount, by his own self-description, was an ordinary man

called to an extraordinary mission of uplifting the lives of others. He remained steadfast in pursuit of that calling. In the process, he became extraordinary himself. When Clarence Blount was born to Lottie and Charles Johnson Blount, Sr., in South Creek, North Carolina on April 20, 1921, I doubt whether anyone outside of his own family could have anticipated just how far his determination and talent would carry him in life.

His father worked on a tobacco farm. His mother would die when he was just 5 years old. The Blount family was so poor they could not afford to buy their children shoes. It was only after the family moved to Baltimore that Clarence Blount was able to begin school at the age of 10. At that time he was unable to read or count on his fingers, but through determination and with the help of dedicated teachers, he graduated from Frederick Douglass High School at the age of 21.

He became one of the greatest champions of American public education ever known. One month after Clarence Blount entered Morgan State University, he was drafted into the then-segregated United States Army to fight in World War II. He served with distinction in Italy as a member of the all-black Buffalo Division of the 92nd Infantry.

The courage and dedication to duty that he demonstrated while removing mines from a river passage earned him a battlefield commission. After fighting for his country against both the enemy and the barriers of Jim Crow, Mr. Blount returned to Morgan State in 1946 and graduated in 1950. He became a teacher, earned a master's degree in education from Johns Hopkins University, and eventually advanced to become the principal of Baltimore's Dunbar High School.

Mr. Speaker, the education of children became Clarence Blount's passion and mission in life. He used his own prior hardships and life experiences as a passport to help other people improve their lives. As a teacher, principal, and later chairman of the Social Services Department of the Community College of Baltimore, Clarence Blount opened the doors to educational opportunities for thousands of young people in our community.

That same calling and that same determination, to address the inadequate funding of our public schools, led Mr. Blount into public life. He sought and won election to the Maryland Senate in 1971. He became the first African American to chair a Senate committee in 1987, and he became Maryland's first African American majority leader in 1983, a post that he held until his retirement last year.

It was during that period of public service that Clarence Blount directly influenced the course of my life. When I was a young legislator serving my second year in the Maryland House of Delegates, Senator Blount, then chair of the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus, encouraged me to run for and win